



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

December 3, 2004
Release #04-13

For More Information Contact:
CMA Public Affairs (410) 436-4555
ABCDF Public Affairs (410) 436-5253

Alarm Sounds During Agent Draining Operations at ABCDF

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. — Yesterday afternoon an alarm sounded at the Aberdeen Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ABCDF) located in the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground as an operator was performing routine mustard agent draining operations. At no time did any agent vapor leave the building's engineering controls. At no time was there a threat to the workers, community or environment.

The operator was attempting to attach a hose to an agent container located inside a sealed enclosure when his outermost glove was torn, exposing the second of three protective layers of gloves to agent. In accordance with established procedures, he inspected his inner gloves for damage, did not see any tears, and took the precaution of changing out the gloves. After resuming normal operations, an alarm sounded indicating the presence of a trace amount of agent.

The operator and his partner immediately put on their protective masks and proceeded to a nearby decontamination shower. Technicians then monitored and cleared both operators using a portable monitor. As a precaution, the operators were sent to the ABCDF medical clinic for observation where they were soon cleared.

Workers operating in the same area of the building temporarily evacuated until the drain station returned to normal reading levels in less than 15 minutes. Drain operations continued later that evening.

"The precautions built into the draining procedure, having operators wear three gloves, worked as it was designed. One glove tore, and the operator remained protected from agent exposure," said ABCDF Commander Lt. Col. Gerald Gladney. "The operator reacted as he was trained, and we will brief all our other operators on this incident as an example of the right way to stay protected," he added.

Since beginning disposal operations in April 2003, workers at the ABCDF have safely neutralized more than 60 percent of the Aberdeen mustard agent stockpile. More information about storage and disposal operations at ABCDF is available at the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency's Web site at <http://www.cma.army.mil>.

#



For more information,
contact the
Edgewood Chemical
Stockpile Outreach Office

Woodbridge Station
1011-B Woodbridge Center Way
Edgewood, MD 21040

(410) 676-6800 or
www.cma.army.mil

The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency is responsible for safely storing and eliminating the United States' aging chemical weapons and agent stockpiles and for the safe elimination of recovered chemical materiel.